

# Table of Activities in the Unit

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## Part 1: What Are Human Rights? (5 sessions)

Students build on their understanding of natural rights to explore the concept of universal human rights under international law. After critically examining the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, students compare and contrast that document with the civil and political rights protected by the United States Constitution and other domestic law. Students also begin working on their unit project, selecting the human rights issue they will focus on and beginning to write their policy brief.

### Activity 1A: The Human Rights Challenge

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Students are introduced to the concept of human rights and consider situations in which human rights may be violated. Students begin learning about the human rights issue that is used as an example throughout the unit, child labor, by watching and responding to a PSA on human rights abuses that also violate child labor laws. They learn about a range of other human rights issues by analyzing a series of scenarios.

### Activity 1B: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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Students learn about the role of inter-governmental organizations in articulating and enforcing international laws and treaties, using the example of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To gain a deeper understanding of the text of this declaration, students create visual interpretations of specific provisions.

### Activity 1C: Are Any Rights Universal?

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Students examine whether any human rights can be considered universal. They look at different approaches to and perspectives on the issue of rights, first by comparing the U.S. Bill of Rights to the UDHR, and then by reading statements about human rights from people around the world.

### Activity 1D: The Unit Project

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Students discuss the ways that organizations such as NGOs can create materials to influence people's views about human rights issues and push for legal and political change. Students also begin work on their unit project, choosing a human rights issue to focus on.

### Activity 1E: The Policy Brief

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Students begin to research their chosen issue and to draft the first section of their policy brief.

## Part 2: Making Rules About Human Rights (5 sessions)

Using the issue of child labor as a model, students explore where human rights “rules” come from. They look at how historical, economic, geographic, and cultural context shape the way that national governments and IGOs have codified human rights protections. Using the examples of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Labor Organization’s Convention 138 as models, students continue to work on their policy brief as they analyze existing laws, policies, conventions, and treaties on their chosen issue.

### Activity 2A: The Rule of Law

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Students practice drafting laws that promote and protect the human rights listed in the UDHR, then draw on stories of child labor to begin exploring the challenges of codifying human rights protections. Students consider how context and perspective may shape our perceptions of whether a practice should be defined as harmful or exploitative.

### Activity 2B: The Law of the Land?

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Students identify groups or organizations that they think should be responsible for codifying rules or laws protecting human rights, and compare the powers of different groups to create binding agreements that apply to more than one country. Students compare the power and jurisdiction of U.S. child labor laws, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and International Labour Organisation Convention 138 and consider challenges to their enforceability.

### Activity 2C: Researching Existing Laws and Treaties

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Students analyze international and domestic child labor laws. Building on their understanding of the role of laws in promoting human rights, students research the existing treaties and agreements on their chosen issue.

### Activity 2D: Policy Brief, Section 2

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Students finish their written analysis of existing laws and policies related to their issue.

## Part 3: Promoting and Protecting Human Rights (4 sessions)

Students examine the enforceability of human rights law, and compare the rule of law with other processes for protecting human rights. Students identify different steps in enforcing human rights laws and treaties, including monitoring, investigation, and intervention, then identify other actions that individuals and groups may take to change the behavior of those who violate human rights. Students conduct research and prepare Section 3 of their policy brief, in which they synthesize their research and analyze how their chosen human rights issue has been monitored, investigated, and enforced.

### Activity 3A: Challenges to Enforcement

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Students examine challenges to enforcing the rule of law on human rights issues. After identifying and comparing different aspects of enforcement, students consider the range of responses that may be made when human rights violations are exposed.

### Activity 3B: Responding to Human Rights Violations

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Students complete their analysis of responses to child labor in the cocoa industry, compare the roles that different groups may play in responding to human rights violations, and discuss the various challenges to enforcing human rights laws and treaties. Students begin researching enforcement efforts for the issue they have chosen for the unit project.

### Activity 3C: Human Rights Enforcement Research

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Students conduct research on investigation and enforcement efforts related to their human rights issue and begin writing Section 3 of their policy brief. Using evidence from human rights investigators to support their findings, students identify violations that have occurred, describe the treaty or law that has been violated, and summarize current enforcement efforts.

### Activity 3D: Policy Brief, Section 3

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Students finish writing Section 3 of their policy brief.

## Part 4: Making a Recommendation (3 sessions)

Students synthesize their research and identify the action or actions they think has (or would have) the greatest effect on reducing human rights violations in the area they have chosen to research.

### Activity 4A: Synthesizing the Evidence

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Students reflect on the results of their research and choose one area to address that they think will have the most impact on improving protections for human rights.

### Activity 4B: Writing the Recommendation

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Students write Section 4 of their policy briefs. They consider how various groups could contribute to the action they are suggesting, and explore careers related to human rights work.

### Activity 4C: Writing a Position Statement

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Students write position statements to complete their policy briefs, then participate in a peer feedback activity.

## Part 5: Advocacy and Human Rights (7 sessions)

Students analyze an existing PSA, then prepare a storyboard for their own PSA. Students identify the desired target audience and outcome for their PSA and draft a storyboard that incorporates key information from their policy brief. After completing storyboards, students share them with their classmates. The class also considers whether the United States should ratify international human rights treaties.

### Activity 5A: Advocating for Change

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Students analyze a PSA on child labor to think about how PSAs target a specific audience and use techniques to encourage people to take action. They identify their target audience for a PSA, their desired outcome, and the methods they will use in the PSA. Students identify key components of their policy brief to highlight in the PSA.

### Activity 5B: Making the PSA Storyboards

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Students draft storyboards for their PSA and reflect on the framing questions from the unit.

### Activity 5C: Sharing Work

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Students look at each other's storyboards and consider the effectiveness of different strategies and tools used to advocate for and protect human rights.

### Activity 5D: Reflections

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Students debate the responsibility of the United States to ratify international human rights treaties, then reflect on the tensions between national sovereignty and the universality of human rights. Students reflect on the framing questions from the unit and make connections between the unit understandings and their unit project.

### Activity 5E: Unit Exam

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Students complete the unit exam, which assesses their understanding of the framing questions and unit content.